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KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES LIST

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FOREWORD

The purpose of the Key Strategic Issues List (KSIL) is to provide military and civilian researchers a ready reference for issues of special interest to the Department of the Army and the Department of Defense (DoD). Unlike other lists that generally reflect issues which are operational or tactical in nature, the focus of the KSIL is strategic. The spotlight is, in other words, on those items that senior Army and DoD leaders should consider in providing military advice and formulating military strategy.

At present, the U.S. military is engaged in a changing situation in Iraq and an increasing presence in Afghanistan, as well as efforts to restore balance in force sizing and structure. With the publication of the 2009 KSIL, the Strategic Studies Institute and the U.S. Army War College invite all researchers to contribute to informing America's leaders of current and emerging challenges.

Researchers are encouraged to contact any Strategic Studies Institute faculty member, listed herein, for further information regarding possible topics.

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Director
Strategic Studies Institute

FUNCTIONAL STRATEGIC ISSUES

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I. Overseas Contingency Operations

1. Assess efforts to respond to evolving challenges in Iraq and Afghanistan

2. Evaluate methods for countering ideological support for terrorism through domestic and foreign means

3. Assess measures for defining progress in counterinsurgency operations

4. Determine what proportion of U.S. land power should be focused on counterinsurgency operations

5. Assess methods for training international security forces (military, paramilitary, and police)

6. Evaluate methods to integrate political, economic, informational, and military tools in counterinsurgency operations

7. Assess efforts to employ local militias in counterinsurgency operations

8. Assess the utility of U.S. land power with respect to complex contingencies and stability operations

II. Homeland Security/Homeland Defense/Civil Support

1. Assess current measures for countering and responding to chemical, biological, nuclear, radiological, and high-explosive threats

2. Assess intelligence collection requirements and restrictions in homeland security, and their implications

3. Examine the strategic implications of missile defense as a component of homeland defense

4. Reassess active and reserve components' roles in homeland security

5. Assess current measures for combining federal, state, and local resources for combating homeland threats

6. Evaluate current measures for identifying and protecting DoD and/or non-DoD critical infrastructure

7. How can we improve interagency planning and preparation for pandemics?

8. How can we establish domestic and international information sharing mechanisms among homeland defense, homeland security, and civil support entities?

9. Assess measures for integrating the private sector into USG responses to public health emergencies

10. Assess the need for distinguishing between crimes and acts of war for certain activities in cyberspace; determine to what extent existing treaties and laws govern cyberspace

11. National Guard: Operational or Strategic Reserve? Implications for homeland security and civil support

12. How can we improve interagency coordination and cooperation in homeland security/homeland defense?

III. Military Change

1. Assess ongoing efforts to respond to the changing character of war:
   a. Unrestricted warfare
   b. Evolution of insurgencies
   c. Hybrid warfare
   d. Cyber warfare
   e. Other

2. Assess responses to revolutionary change in warfare, or responses to unexpected technological breakthroughs

3. Evaluate current capabilities for conducting information operations and strategic communication in the global arena: policy and practice

4. Evaluate projected land force requirements for full spectrum dominance, to include peacekeeping and stability operations

5. Assess unity of effort as a substitute for unity of command

6. Assess the strategic implications of emerging operational concepts

7. Assess themes in the Army's Strategic Planning Guidance

8. Force proficiencies against irregular challenges

9. Force capabilities for stability operations
   a. Force capabilities to dominate in complex terrain
   b. Capabilities for strategic responsiveness
   c. The Army's Global Force Posture
   d. Force capabilities for battle command

10. Assess inter- and intra-theater mobility requirements for the U.S. military

11. Assess logistical support measures for U.S. allies and coalition partners

12. Assess transformation of OSD, the Joint Staff, and Service staffs

13. Evaluate efforts at transforming Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve

14. Assess role of women in combat: laws and norms

15. Assess measures of modular force performance

16. Assess Army Transformation in light of OIF and other ongoing operations

17. Assess resource conflicts between operational and institutional transformation

18. Evaluate advantages and disadvantages of transforming toward lean efficiency

19. Examine whether ARFORGEN meets the Army's needs for extended operations

20. Assess cyberspace in terms of risk and as an enabler to conduct warfare

21. Streamlining the business of DoD's business: Is DoD responsive enough in today's fast-changing world?

22. Examine the strategic implications of space as a theater of war

23. Assess the Army's role in a possible nuclear war

24. Assess the need for more foreign area officers and billets in the 21st century strategic environment

25. Assess the appropriateness of the current force structure for managing complex contingencies and/or stability operations

IV. National Security Strategy/National Military Strategy

1. Assess U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) and/or U.S. National Military Strategy (NMS); how/where should the United States prioritize its efforts?

2. Assess costs and benefits of alternative grand strategies

3. Evaluate strategic implications of irregular, traditional, and hybrid challenges

4. Assess the value of deterrence and dissuasion in U.S. national strategy

5. Evaluate proliferation and counterproliferation measures in a globalized world

6. Evaluate measures to integrate military and nonmilitary tools to achieve strategic objectives and avoid or resolve potential conflict

7. Evaluate the utility of military force as an instrument of policy in the 21st century

8. Examine the implications of U.S. missile defense for allies and potential adversaries

9. Evaluate the utility of strategic net and risk assessment in a multipolar system

10. Assess potential impact of global warming on U.S. national security

11. Assess how military power might complement a "smart power" approach to national security

V. Landpower Employment

1. Evaluate current responses to irregular challenges

2. Requirements for military operations in complex terrain

3. Assess the nature and importance of information superiority in military operations

4. Assess evolving landpower roles in stabilization, reconstruction, and humanitarian operations

5. Assess measures for improving Joint, combined, interagency, NGO and IGO cooperation in humanitarian and counterinsurgency operations

6. Evaluate the effectiveness of U.S. landpower in foreign policy execution by combatant commanders and country teams

7. Assess the impact of international law on American military operations

VI. Landpower Generation and Sustainment

1. Assess the impact of legal constraints on military and interagency mobilization

2. Evaluate measures to overcome anti-access and area-denial strategies

3. Evaluate measures for operating in areas with primitive and austere infrastructures

4. Evaluate the tradeoffs of power projection, prepositioning, and forward stationing

5. Assess landpower capabilities for waging protracted conflicts

6. Evaluate the impact of the expanding roles of contractors and other civilians in defense operations

7. Assess landpower's role in seabasing as a logistical and operational concept

8. Assess measures to sustaining a modular, capabilities-based Army

9. Assess measures to establish a single Army logistics enterprise

10. Assess Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model's implications for manning, equipping, and sustaining functions

VII. Leadership, Personnel Management, and Culture

1. Evaluate retention and readiness measures of active and reserve forces

2. Assess measures to develop soldiers and leaders for future missions

3. Assess the need to change the continuum of service

4. Assess the apparent gap between civilian and military cultures

5. Assess the relationship between the U.S. military and American society:
   a. Demographics: who is in it, and who fights?
   b. Civilian control over the military in the 21st century

6. Assess efforts to identify, manage, and sustain the Army's intellectual and technological talent

7. Assess the status of the Army as a profession

8. Assess measures to sustain public support for the U.S. armed forces

9. Evaluate how the Army develops and responds to "lessons learned"

10. Assess measures for obtaining Joint synergy despite different service cultures

11. Evaluate measures for maintaining a culture of innovation

12. Assess the implications of adopting commercial best business practices for the military

13. Assess measures to manage changes in temporary end strength

14. Assess measures to manage nondeployable soldiers

15. Evaluate the strategic purpose and effectiveness of the Individual Ready Reserve

16. Examine the pre-commissioning program

17. Examine ways to revise the military decisionmaking process

18. Examine differences between dissent and disloyalty regarding civilian authority

19. Analyze the impact of repeated deployments on families

20. Examine how the fact that fewer members of Congress have served in the armed services affects future Defense policy?

21. Assess implications of interagency integration on professional military education, career progression, and other human resource management practices

22. Examine the utilization of foreign area officers in ODC and DAO positions within the Senior Defense Official (SDO) concept.

23. Assess the knowledge, skills, and abilities military leaders require in complex contingencies and/or stability operations

REGIONAL STRATEGIC ISSUES

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I. Evolving Regional Security Matters in Africa

1. Africa and the war on terrorism

2. Lessons learned from Africa's insurgencies

3. Implications of HIV/AIDS on the ground forces of African partners

4. Strategic implications of Chinese activity in Africa

5. Analysis of regional African infrastructure and its impacts on how African nations provide for their own security (e.g., the Zambezi River Valley or the Great Lakes nations or the Trans-Sahel)

6. U.S. strategy toward the Trans-Sahel

7. U.S. strategy toward the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its impact on its neighbors

8. Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea subregion—threats, challenges, and solutions

9. U.S. strategy toward the west Indian Ocean nations (Comoros, Mauritius) and southeast African coast

10. Nexus of security and development in Africa – why they go hand-in-hand

11. U.S. military roles in human security issues in Africa

12. The impacts and risks of mass migrations and refugee flows in Africa

13. The role of the African Union in African peacekeeping operations

14. Army international activities programs in Africa

15. Professional development of African militaries

16. Developing partnerships with Africa's powers: Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Africa

17. The future role and organization of AFRICOM

18. Transnational crime and security in Africa

19. The global economic crisis and security in Africa

II. Evolving Regional Security Matters in the Middle East and the Islamic World

1. U.S. interests with respect to a stable, sovereign Iraq

2. Changing the U.S. military presence in the Persian/Arabian Gulf

3. Security issues created by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

4. U.S. strategy toward Iran

5. U.S. strategy toward Libya

6. U.S. strategy toward Syria

7. Regional and global implications of the Iranian nuclear program and ballistic missile program

8. The impact of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) on U.S. national security and the ways in which the United States may conduct a responsible withdrawal from Iraq

9. Strategic implications of a changing Egypt

10. The future of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the smaller Gulf monarchies in Middle Eastern security

11. Strategic implications of fully or partially democratic, but anti-U.S. governments, mass movements, and political parties, in the Middle East

12. Strategic implications of increasing Chinese interests in oil, arms sales, and economic aid in the Middle East

13. Future role of external powers and security organizations in the Middle East

14. Emerging and evolving military relationships among Middle Eastern states including counterterrorism relationships

15. Strategies that regional states have for dealing with the United States and its allies in the Middle East

16. Regional security strategies in the Middle East including ways in which the United States can most effectively cooperate with regional allies

17. The nature of politically-oriented Islamic militancy, salafi jihadism, and their implications for U.S. and regional security

18. U.S. strategy toward Lebanon

19. Efforts to contain and moderate violent ethnic and sectarian conflicts throughout the Middle East

20. Dangers of "spillover" problems from Iraq, and the activities of regional states within Iraq

21. The danger of the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) of all kinds throughout the region and the potential danger of regional conflicts in which WMD are employed.

22. Regional implications of efforts to improve and modernize the conventional militaries of major regional powers including Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia

23. Challenges of political reform (including fair treatment of all religious sects and ethnic groups) and the ways in which such reform may enhance domestic and regional security

24. U.S.-Iraqi security relations and cooperation following a withdrawal of U.S. combat units from Iraq

III. Evolving Regional Security Matters in the Asia-Pacific

1. Balancing U.S. security interests in China and Taiwan

2. The future of the Japan-U.S. security relationship

3. Implications of China's growing economic and military power in the region

4. Security concerns in Southeast Asia and implications for the United States

5. Strategic response to North Korea's intentions and capabilities

6. Evolving Republic of Korea-U.S. security relations

7. Evolving Japan-U.S. security relations

8. Japan's relationships with Asian nations

9. Future of ASEAN and U.S. strategic posture in the region

10. The role of the U.S. military on the Korean Peninsula

11. Future of the U.S. alliance with Australia and New Zealand

12. Sources and dimensions of anti-Americanism in Asia: policy implications

13. Chinese-North Korean relations

14. Politics of history and memory in South-North Korean relations

15. Role of nationalism in Asia and implications for U.S. policy

16. Role of ideology in Asia and implications for U.S. policy

17. China's regional and global grand strategy

18. China's military transformation

19. Russia's interests, policy and actions in Asia

20. Transformation of U.S. forward deployment in Asia

21. Toward a U.S. energy security strategy for Asia and the Pacific

22. The strategic implications of China's growing space capabilities

23. Organized crime and security in South Asia

24. India as a rising Asian power and the expansion of its overall capabilities and interests

25. Strategic implications of U.S.-Vietnam security relations

26. Evolving U.S.-Thailand security relations

27. Contending sea powers in East Asia

28. Strategic implications of U.S. economic downturn and global financial crisis on U.S.-Asian relations

IV. Evolving Regional Security Matters in Europe

1. U.S. Army roles in future Balkan security

2. A roadmap for future security in the Balkans

3. The revival of the Russian military

4. Prospects for Russo-American security and/or defense cooperation

5. Russia's future relationships with Europe and the United States

6. Energy security in Europe

7. Democratization and instability in Ukraine, Georgia, and Belarus

8. Impact of growing Muslim populations on European security policy

9. Strategic implications of reconfiguring the U.S. military presence in Europe

10. Implications of a changing NATO

11. U.S. leadership in NATO: Does/should the U.S. Army still play a role?

12. NATO and EU defense capabilities: new or just repackaging the old?

13. EU civil-military cell: a useful model for Joint/interagency operations?

14. Is the U.S.-Europe military capabilities gap still growing; are U.S. technology transfer rules helping or hindering?

15. Implications of OIF for European cooperation in the war on terrorism

16. EU expansion while excluding Turkey from membership

17. Strategic implications of drawing down U.S. forces in Europe

18. Will ISAF break NATO?

19. Should the United States encourage handover of OEF to NATO and allow CENTCOM to focus on OIF?

20. EUCOM's future role with the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre-Narcotics (MOAC-N) located in Lisbon, Portugal (7 nation regional center)

21. Coordination across the COCOM seams: The unique role that Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) plays in the EUCOM AOR to combat cross-Atlantic illicit narcotics trafficking

V. Evolving Regional Security Matters in South Asia

1. Balancing U.S. security interests between India and Pakistan

2. Role of India in world events and U.S.-Indian military-strategic relations

3. Maintaining stability and security in Afghanistan

4. Long-term implications of maintaining the OIF coalition

5. The evolving American security relationship with Pakistan

6. The global response to state failure or internal conflict in South Asia

7. Organized crime and security in South Asia

8. The risks, benefits and implications of poppy eradication in Afghanistan

9. Iran: A potential partner in stemming illegal Afghan drug flow? Should the coalition seek to engage Iran in mutually beneficial border control to stem the flow of illicit narcotics?

VI. Evolving Regional Security Matters in Central Asia

1. Growing U.S. security interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia

2. Russian-China-U.S. competition in Central Asia

3. Implications of energy development in the Caucasus and Caspian regions

4. Synchronizing security cooperation and political reform in Central Asia

5. The role and structure of the U.S. military presence in Central Asia

VII. Evolving Regional Security Matters in the Western Hemisphere

1. U.S. interests in Caribbean security issues
2. Hemispheric security forces (military and police) and new threats
3. Improving security ties with Brazil
4. Lessons from the Colombian insurgency
5. Immigration and people smuggling as a security issue
6. Alternately governed space and implications for territorial security
7. Gangs and other transnational crime as a threat to the area
8. Venezuela as an exporter of political instability
9. Narco-funded terrorism networks
10. Instability and disenfranchised indigenous and poor populations
11. Implications of the rising threat of populism in the region; the difference between populists and the "responsible left"
12. Addressing the fundamental disconnect between the U.S. and Latin American visions of current threats to the region
13. Long-term implications of Chinese engagement in Latin America
14. Maintaining the viability of hemispheric security forces during a time of declining budgets
15. Implications for U.S. security of a post-Castro Cuba

16. Forming a North American Security Community

17. Improving U.S.-Mexico security ties

18. Implications of the drug war in Mexico

19. Impact and desirability of forming sub-regional security organizations like the *Conferencia de Fuerzas Armadas Centroamericanas* (CFAC)

VIII. Other

1. Revising the boundaries of the geographic Combatant Commands

2. Integrating regional security cooperation plans, basing, and presence policies

3. Environmental issues as a basis for enhancing security cooperation

4. How Interagency Combatant Commands function

5. Analysis of a viable and relevant sub-national, national or trans-national political actor along the framework suggested by the Analytical Cultural Framework for Strategy and Policy (ACFSP) as discussed in the May 2009 SSI Letort Paper "Cultural Dimensions of Strategy and Policy" to identify that group's sense of purpose and values, the interests that derive from them, and implications for U.S. strategy and policy regarding that group

WAR AND SOCIETY

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I. American Society

1. Discuss ways of balancing individual civil rights and national security requirements

2. Assess the debate over America's place in the world

3. Examine America's changing perceptions of other nations

4. Examine the U.S. media's role in political and social mobilization

5. Examine American civil-military relations in wartime

6. Examine the role of religion and faith in the American way of war

7. Strategic implications of public perceptions of who serves, and who dies

8. Assess how operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have affected U.S. civil-military relations

9. Assess civilian control of the military and the requirement to provide military advice

10. Examine the need for political boundaries for general and flag officers, active and retired

II. International Society

1. Assess the "Clash of Cultures" debate

2. Examine the implications of anti-Americanism for U.S. foreign policy

3. Examine centers of power in other societies and cultures

4. Assess the role of "strategic communication" in establishing trust with our partners

STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE
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